



Breathing In, Breathing Out: Keeping a Writer's Notebook

Ralph Fletcher

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Keeping a notebook may be the single best way to survive as a writer. It encourages a greater sensitivity to your world, inside and out. It serves as a haven for new ideas until they are strong and mature enough to face the harsh light of rational judgment. It gives you a quiet place to catch your breath and begin writing.

Breathing In, Breathing Out is a book for the writer in each one of us, however lost, however buried. Ralph Fletcher takes a probing look into the nature of a writer's notebook, examining what it is, how writers use it, and what makes it tick. You will discover why writers like Naomi Shihab Nye and Dorothy Allison consider their notebooks so important to the work they create. You will also read snippets from Fletcher's notebook, where he reveals the "displayed self" of a writer whose innermost workings he knows best.

To Fletcher, keeping a writer's notebook is as natural an activity as breathing so he has organized his book in a way that illuminates two basic aspects of the process. *Breathing In* refers to the way the notebook can serve as a receptacle for selected insights, lines, images, dreams, and fragments of conversations. In this way it helps you pay closer attention to your world. *Breathing Out* is intended to suggest the notebook as an ideal place to use what you have collected and spark your own original writing.

This book is for new writers as well as those who may have once loved to write but have lost the spark along the way. It will help you find a natural rhythm for using a notebook and in the process start living the life of a writer.

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